REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 20 is added. The added claim introduces no new matter. Reconsideration of the application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicant notes that a Request for Personal Interview was submitted on March 21, 2008. In this Request, Applicant requested Supervisory participation with decision-making authority in view of the protracted prosecution of this application. Despite numerous attempts by Applicant's representative to confirm the personal interview in an effort to expedite prosecution of this application, a personal interview has not been granted. Applicant reiterates the Request for a personal interview in an attempt to expedite prosecution of this application.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 7-10 and 16-19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,178,422 to Tada et al. (hereinafter "Tada") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,819,295 to Nakagawa et al. (hereinafter "Nakagawa"); and rejects claims 2-6 and 11-15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Tada in view of Nakagawa and U.S. Patent No. 6,189,032 to Susaki et al. (hereinafter "Susaki"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Office Action relies on Tada as allegedly disclosing the features of the independent claims, with the exception of the retrieval condition being defined based on at least one attribute of the object and in response to an access request from a user for the object matching retrieval condition and the identifier, performing access control on the basis of the access right. The Office Action relies on Nakagawa to remedy these shortfalls. The analysis of the Office Action fails for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 recites, among other features, an object management method for performing access control for a stored object, the method comprising the steps of: defining a retrieval condition for retrieving an object, the retrieval condition being defined based on at least one

attribute of the object; setting an access right in association with the retrieval condition; setting an identifier for identifying the object, the identifier associated with the object in a one-to-one relationship; and in response to an access request from a user for the object matching the retrieval condition and the identifier, performing access control on the basis of the access right. Claim 10 recites similar features.

In Tada, when a retrieval command is input by a user to the document management system, the system control program 100 initiates the retrieval control program 120 to start document retrieval processing. First, the program 120 invokes the document retrieval program 160 in step 2000. The program 160 refers to retrieval data under a retrieval condition specified by the user, obtains a list of documents associated with the retrieval condition as a result of retrieval, and stores the list in the work area 190. Next, the program 120 initiates the accessible document list creation program 170 in step 2010 to attain an accessible document list, i.e., a list of documents which can be accessed by the user, and then stores the list in the area 190. Finally, the program 120 starts the access control program 180 in step 2020. The program 180 accomplishes a disjunction operation between the list of retrieved documents created and stored in the area 190 by the document retrieval program and the accessible document list created and stored in the work area 190 by the program 170 to generate a list of retrieved documents after the access control determination, and returns the list to the user to thereby terminate the program 120. Thus, access control in Tada is not performed in accordance with defining a retrieval condition for retrieving an object, the retrieval condition being defined based on at least one attribute of the object; and setting an access right in association with the retrieval condition. Rather, Tada teaches attaining a retrieval list based on the retrieval condition. Access control in Tada is not performed on the basis of the retrieval condition, but on the basis of the separate accessible document list, and the access right is not set in association with the retrieval condition.

Although the Office Action appears to suggest that Nakagawa somehow remedies at least some of the above shortfalls, the Office Action does not apply Nakagawa in a manner that would have reasonably suggested the above features. For example, the Office Action refers to (1) a document having attributes such as a date when the document was made, and (2) "performing access control based on the access right and displaying the result." However, the relied-upon portions of Nakagawa do not disclose defining a retrieval condition for retrieving an object, the retrieval condition being defined based on at least one attribute of the object; and setting an access right in association with the retrieval condition, either. Rather, as best understood by Applicant, Nakagawa deals with a folder management system, that allows users to retrieve versions of documents. The mere mention of documents being stored with attributes such as date, does not disclose defining a retrieval condition for retrieving an object, the retrieval condition being defined based on at least one attribute of the object; and setting an access right in association with the retrieval condition, either.

The analysis of the Office Action does not clearly articulate how the folder management system of Nakagawa would have logically commended itself to one of ordinary skill in the art looking to modify the retrieval and access control in Tada. Additionally, it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have modified Tada in the manner apparently suggested by the Office Action.

As discussed above, Tada teaches a specific protocol for matching documents and performing access control. The asserted modification of Tada to include the allegedly corresponding features of Nakagawa would impermissibly alter Tada's method of operation and render it unsuitable for its intended purpose. For example, modifying Tada to allow access on the basis of access rights set in association with a retrieval condition is contrary to Tada's method of controlling access based on a group to which the user belongs.

With regard to claims 5, 6, 14 and 15, the Office Action relies on Susaki as allegedly teaching access right to a certain operation such a reading, writing, deleting, updating or executing and performing the access control via the access control list and identifier of objects such as file or service stored in the table. The Office Action relies on Figs. 4-6, and col. 7, lines 36-55 of Susaki as allegedly teaching these features. The Office Action summarily concludes that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the combination of Tada and Nakagawa to include such features for the purpose of controlling access right to a certain service by a user of client terminal. These assertions are incorrect.

Fig. 9 of Applicant's disclosure is a flow chart showing the flow of operation of the object management system 10 when the retrieval conditions are ORed. Fig. 10 of Applicant's disclosure is a flow chart showing the flow of operation of the object management system 10 when the retrieval conditions are ANDed. These separate combinations of features are not reasonably suggested by the disclosure of Susaki.

The paraphrased teaching of Susaki does not specifically disclose the features recited in claims 5, 6, 14 and 15. For example, Susaki does not teach access control means performing access control, if an access -requested object matches a plurality of retrieval conditions, on the basis of OR of the matched retrieval conditions. Additionally, it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the combination of Tada and Nakagawa in the manner suggested. In this regard, the conclusory statement of the Office Action does not establish why one of ordinary skill in the art would have modified the asserted combination of Tada and Nakagawa in the manner suggested.

For at least the above reasons, the applied references cannot reasonably be considered to have suggested all of the combinations of features positively recited in claims 1, 5, 6, 10, 14 and 15. Additionally, claims 2-4, 7-9, 11-13 and 16-19 would also not have been

reasonably suggested by the applied references for at least the respective dependence of these claims, directly or indirectly, on an allowable base claim, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-19 are respectfully requested.

Added claim 20 is likewise allowable at least for its dependence on an allowable base claim, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that this claim recites.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-20 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

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